THE

Haunted Farmer;

OR,

THE GHOST OF THE GRANARY,

A TALE,

APPLICABLE TO THE TIMES.

by Mr Robert Vale, Chippenham, Wilts

——"I was hungry and ye fed me not."—

Pale Hunger's Curse would sink to Hell
A Spirit from on high;
But oh, more dreadful still to tell
Is the Curse in a Dead Man's Eye!
And all by Night, to see such Sight,
More dreadful than to die!

LYRIC BALLADS.

CHIPPENHAM:

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PREFACE.

To pourtray certain Results faithfully, though with a rude hand, may perhaps be more conducive to the Interests of Morality, than designs, more elaborately finished, with the Resemblance less preserved;—Hence, in the following Sketch, the Author has permitted himself to give little more than a metrical delineation of an event which recently transpired on his notice.

This premised, it follows that to those who are acquainted with the Circumstance, he can have nothing to explain; as they

will readily recognize the Fact in the depicted Feature; whilst, to those who are not, he flatters himself it will be sufficiently evident, from the general Cast of the Times, that the Picture he has drawn is——at least not that of an Improbability.

THE

HAUNTED FARMER.

LATE was the Hour; the Watch-Dog yell'd
Across the distant Glen;
Owls hooted; and the wild Winds swell'd;
As the lone Farmer homeward held
His Foot-fall o'er the Fen.

From the scant Market, where with Glee,
He notic'd Dearth's excess,
He came; for Store of Grain had he;
And what its future Price would be
It pleas'd him now to guess.

'Twas hence he came: but whilst his Views
Hope gilded thus with Gain:
Qualms, such as will perforce transfuse,
Through Bosoms which Heav'n's Boon abuse,
His Pleasure dash'd with Pain.

For so kind Mercy has decreed,
In Fate's eternal Will;
That, as a Warning ere the Deed,
Thunder, the Light'ning shall precede,
And Sin, the conscious Thrill.

Meanwhile the Farmer, else so gay,
Across the dun Heath sped:
And now the sullen Hinges play;
And now the groaning Gate gave way,
That to his Mansion led.

And now the Stable, now the Stye,
And now the Stall he past,
And now the Granary meets his Eye:—
And now strange Figures, gliding by,
Transfix him all aghast.

Figures they were that, whilst a Gleam
Their Eye-balls faintly threw
Nothing;——no not in Pharaoh's Dream,
So hunger-worn could Fancy deem,
E'er press'd on Pity's View.

And now they glid, and now they glar'd,
And now they glanc'd away:
And now but One, of all appear'd;
One only, with a hoary Beard
A Staff, and Mantle grey.

" And me thou knowst," the Spectre said,
" Thy Father's Father I,
" Who liv'd in Times when Farmers sped,
" Not by withholding Hunger's Bread;
" But soothing Nature's cry.

" Liv'd, when to such, as to their Sires,
" The Village Train look'd up;
" And festive, nightly, round those Fires,
" Where Labour's highest Hope respires
" In Blessings pledg'd their Cup.

" But what are such as Thou?——A Pest:
" The Curse of Rich and Poor:
" Wolves, who would lay their Country waste,
" And sport with Life, as 'twere a jest,
" Themselves to profit more.

" Yes Caitiff:—Else thy Friends around,
" Thy Neighbours couldst thou see,
" Meagre as those, a Minute's bound
" Presented on this Spectral Ground,
" Consigned to starve by thee?

" Else wouldst thou hoard up Store on Store;
" Yet still those Stores deny?
" Nay, charge the Suff'rings of the Poor,
" Impious, on Heav'n! whilst, at thy Door,
" They droop, despair, and die?

" But mark me!—The avenging Hand
" Is sure to fall, though slow;
" And they who mock a groaning Land,
" As sure as in Desert they stand,
" As sure shall feel the Blow,"——

This said, he ceas'd: Whilst drops of Fear
The Farmer's Brows bedew;
Yet still a Sound he seem'd to hear,
And, as it quicken'd on his Ear,
New Terrors thrill'd him through.

For now, ev'n now, the dozing Dale
A distant Din awoke;
Horns blew—and, now upon the Gale,
Precursive Echoes, deep'ning tell
The Bands of Order broke.

And now abroad wild Tumult rav'd,
And now it nearer drew;
And now around the Farm-yard wav'd
Strange Lights; and Riot, clubb'd and stav'd,
Burst on the Farmer's View.

And now, thrice starting, thrice he cries;
And,—" Spare me;" thrice he said:
And—" Thrice,"— as slow it seem'd to rise,
" Thrice wretched he," a Voice replies,
" Who cannot rest in Bed."

For Lo, in Bed the Farmer was,
And deep in Slumber gone.——
But what avails the sensual Pause?
GUILT's Curtain, Sleep but wider draws;
Whilst CONSCIENCE STILL ACTS ON.

J. M. Coombs, Printer, Chippenham.

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